DUO-FACTS

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Rockin' and Rollin' with Fats Geronimo

The Rock-A-Fire Explosion is happening! So far, it's hit 14 Show-Biz Pizza Places around the country, and it's likely to strike near you soon.

What's the Rock-A-Fire Explosion?

It's not what, but who. They're a furry rock-and-roll band led by head gorilla, Fats Geronimo, who plays his own custom version of a piano. Backing up Fats is happy-go-lucky Duke LaRue on drums, Beach Bear on guitar, and Mitzi Mozarella with pom-poms. Fats also gives the spotlight to his good buddies, Rolfe de Wolf who does a duet with his puppet, Earle Shmerle, and Billy Bob Brockli, a real "down home" picker of an instrument that is a cross between a guitar and a banjo.

Fats and his band are neither men nor machines, but a unique combination of both. Like humans, they can blink their eyes, move their lips and belt out a hearty rendition of "It's Your Birthday, Baby!" Although much like robots whose actions are electronically programmed, these characters have personalities all their own.

Here, head gorilla Fats Geronimo (center) and his Rock-A-Fire Explosion band tune up their instruments for an enthusiastic round of their original song, "It's Your Birthday, Baby!" On the drums is Duke LaRue, on guitar is Beach Bear, and with pom-poms is Mitzi Mozarella.

Fats Geronimo and his friends are the creation of Aaron Fechter, an electronics wizard in his mid-twenties, in Orlando, Fla. Aaron says his idea for the band began about four or five years ago when he first developed a "talking head" controlled and activated by a small computer. This success encouraged him to design an entire character. One character led to another, and Aaron found he had discovered some rare musical talent in his new personalities.

Now Aaron is president and director of his own company, Creative Engineering Inc., which he calls "the home of electronimation," and which he says is known as "the world's foremost manufacturer of sophisticated animated characters." Aaron's operation was recently featured nationwide on the syndicated "PM Magazine" TV show.

And, believe it or not, Duo-Fast plays an important role in Fats Geronimo's act!

In the airy downtown warehouse where this band comes to life, our KN-1840 stapler is used to build props and stages, and crews use our CN-325 to custom-build shipping crates for these furry singers and their instruments.

Just like the characters in the band, the props have their own creative genius. During performances, a happy half-moon face jumps delightfully up and down, a grinning sun blinks lazily, and a dancing cloud releases the lanky "Birthday Spider" at the appropriate moment.

How Creative Engineering and Duo-Fast got together is a story all its own, says Marty Kramer of Florida Sales and Service Division. "About two years ago at a regional trade show, someone from Creative Engineering inquired at our booth about a glue gun," he says. Marty followed up with the 3M Hot Melt Glue Gun, which the crew now uses to fit Fats and his buddies into their fur coats.

Now, Aaron's crew numbers about 100 people, 50 of whom are artists and the rest of whom are mechanics, electronic engineers, sound engineers, writers and producers. To help them keep up with the hot demand for the Rock-A-Fire Explosion, Marty has since provided them with pneumatic tools.

Fats and his band haven't yet got a song on the Top 40, but it may not be long. Aaron is already sending this band to domestic and foreign amusement parks.

Until their first gold album is produced, you can find Fats Geronimo and his friends performing nightly at Show-Biz Pizza Places across the country. They attract a steady crowd, and the restaurant owners like them for many reasons: They don't eat much pizza, they don't ask for raises, and all they need to keep their energy charged is a little electricity and a lot of applause.



Rolf de Wolfe steals the spotlight for a duet with Earle Shmerle. The sign behind the rainbow advises the audience when to applaud. The audience, however, doesn't need a sign to tell them when to laugh.



Welcome to Smitty's Station and some real down home pickin' and grinnin' with Billy Bob Brockli. He keeps his jugs of moonshine handy just in case his throat gets dry.



Marty Kramer of Florida Sales and Service Division applauds as Richard Prieser uses the KN-1840 to put the finishing touches on a prop for Fats Geronimo's act.


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